A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ANCESTRY LIBRARY EDITION

Cass County Public Library - Genealogy Branch

About Ancestry

Ancestry.com is the largest online genealogy database in the world. As of the end of 2013, Ancestry provides access to over 12.7 billion records. These records come from partnerships with libraries, archives, historical societies, churches and many other organizations.

Ancestry is also home to more than 20 million user-contributed family trees — public trees can be browsed by all ancestry users. As a whole, Ancestry's collection of records is unparalleled, which makes it a universal source of genealogical information. It's the best place to start for those just beginning their family history research.

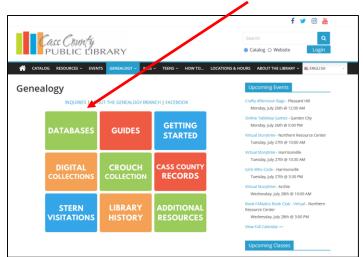
How to Access Ancestry Library Edition

The Cass County Public Library system provides our patrons with **free access** to *Ancestry Library Edition* from any branch. *You must be using a library computer or library Wi-Fi in order to access it.* In order to access this version of the database, you must click on the link provided on the *Genealogy Databases* page of the CCPL library website. This page can be typing www.casscolibrary.org/gendatabases into your browser's address bar or by taking the following steps from the main page of the library website (www.casscolibrary.org).

Step One: Click on *Genealogy* in the Navigation Bar







CATALOG RESOURCES - EVENTS GENEALOGY - KIDS - TEENS - HOWTO LOCATIONS & HOURS ABOUT THE LIBRARY - LOGIN

Genealogy Databases

Browse this collection of links to helpful genealogy databases for beginners and experienced genealogists alike.

Library Databases

Your library card gives you 24/7 access to many databases and periodicals in a variety of topics. To view an A-2 listing of all of CCPL's subscriptions excesses, click here.

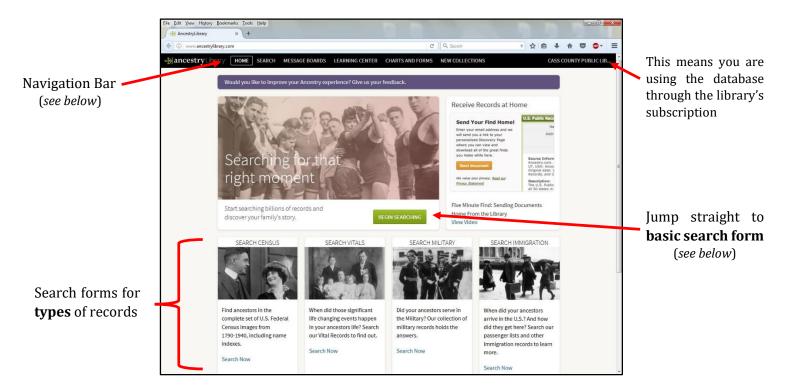
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Step Three: Click on the *blue "Ancestry" link* to access the database

Note: Remember, you *must* follow this process in order to access Ancestry for **free** with the library's subscription.

Navigating the Main Page



Note: If the home page of Ancestry does not look like this on your computer, then you are not accessing it through CCPL's free access and may be on the subscription version of the database. Return to the library website and repeat the steps outlined above.

Home Page - Ancestry Library Edition vs. Ancestry

The main page for Ancestry Library Edition has a different look and resources than the main page of the paid subscription version. Most notably, with the Library Edition you will not have access to the personal family tree feature or private messages that a personal account has. While you can search and view member trees in the Library Edition, you cannot make your own. If you would like to create a family tree, it is recommended that you create a *free personal account* with Ancestry and transfer any information you find while using the Library Edition.

Ouick Links

At the bottom of the main page, Ancestry provides shortcuts to different parts of the database and common record collections. These *Quick Links* include *City Directories*, *Military* record collections, Ancestry *Message Boards*, as well as a section of links to search *specific years of the U.S. Federal Census*. Using these can help you get to the search forms for the collections or types of records you want to search much faster.

Navigation Bar



Home

Clicking *Home* when on another page of Ancestry Library Edition will bring you back to the home page.

Search

Clicking here will open a drop-down list of links to different search forms: *All Categories* is the **basic search form**, but you can also select from *Census & Voter Lists*, *Birth*, *Marriage & Death*, *Military*, and *Immigration & Travel* to use the specific search form for those record types. The **Card Catalog** (see below) is also accessible here.

Message Boards

Here you can view interactions between Ancestry members including research questions, volunteer look-up solicitation, and collaboration between genealogist researching the same topics, geographic regions, and families. (*A personal account is needed in order to contribute and interact with other members on these boards*.)

Learning Center

Allows access to research aids, tips and tricks, and informational material from the experts at Ancestry.

Charts and Forms

Download and print genealogy forms like ancestral charts, research calendars, family group sheets, and source summaries prepared by Ancestry.com. You can also find blank census forms here.

New Collections

Clicking here connects you with a Card Catalog list of the newest and most recently updated record collections available on Ancestry. Checking this is a good way to stay up to date with new resources in the database.

Searching

Basic Search Form

This form can be accessed either by clicking on Search in the navigation bar and then on *All Categories* <u>or</u> simply by clicking on the green *Begin Searching* button on the main page. The basic search form will allow you to *search all of Ancestry's records simultaneously*.

Pros

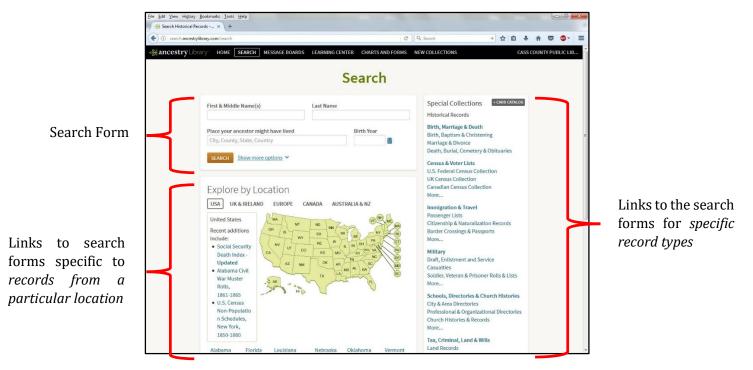
Gives a cross-section of Ancestry's records Best place to start with new research Can help locate basic records quickly

Cons

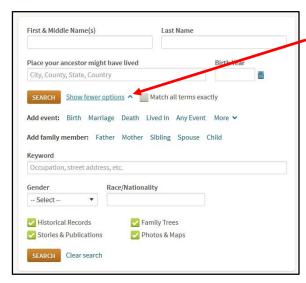
Searches for common names can be ineffective Amount of results can be overwhelming Requires additional filtering of results

Beginner's Search Form Tips

- Before searching, make sure you have the basic information for the individual you are searching for; fill out a basic family tree first to *clarify names*, *dates*, *and locations so you are prepared to fill out the search form*
- Start with a general search a first and last name, location (city and/or county, state), and date of birth
- Keep in mind any possible spelling variations and try all of them to see if it changes your results



Advanced Search



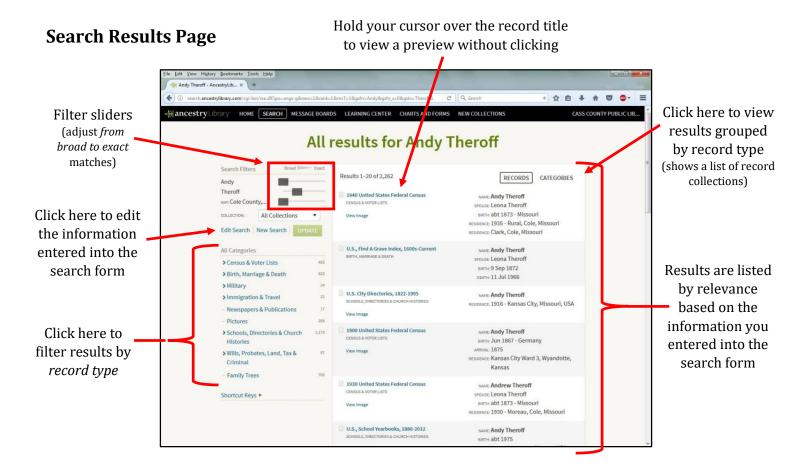
In order to access the longer version of the basic search form, click on "*Show more options*" next to the orange *Search* button.

This will allow you to provide more detailed information and conduct a more specific search. These new options include the date and location of a life event (to find records related to that event), and family members' names (to find records where those members are included, i.e. census records).

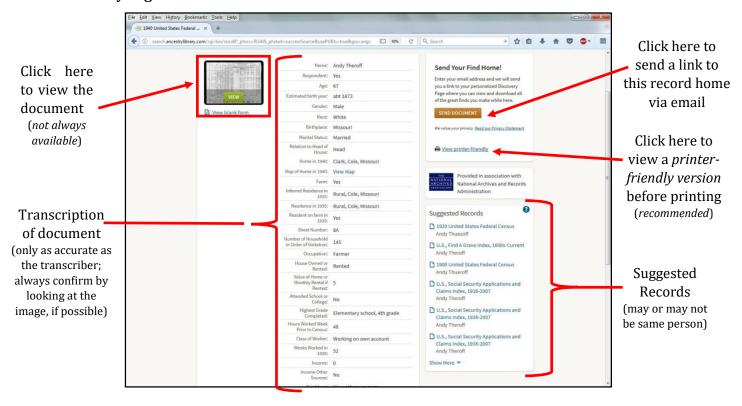
Here you can also *determine the types of results that are included*. If you don't want Ancestry members' family trees to be included in your search, remove the check in its box. Alternatively, if you only want to see results from members' family trees, uncheck all other boxes.

An Important Note on Filling Out the Search Form

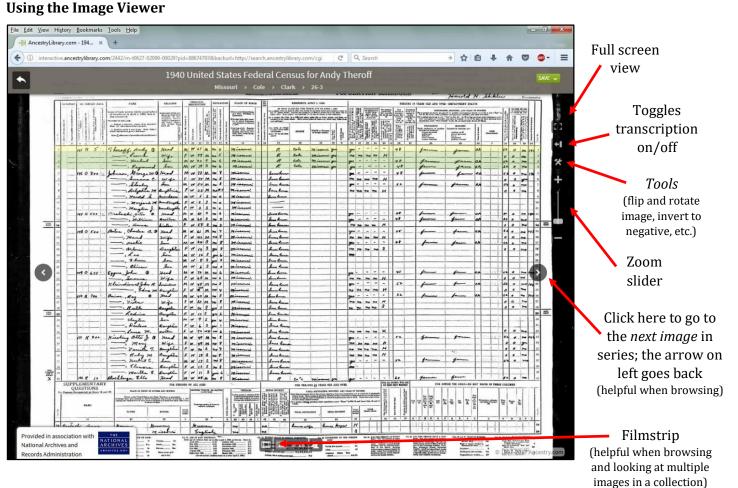
Filling out <u>every line</u> of the search form with detailed information is rarely beneficial. If the record itself doesn't include that information, then searching for it will not help. It is a common mistake beginner's make with Ancestry – and it is why basic search results often have census and directory records at the top. For example, if you include a mother and father's name in your search, it may help Ancestry put a census record where they are living together up at the top of the search results. However, doing so will also push records that do not include that information much lower in the results or may not include them in the results at all. The same goes for including middle names and especially for dates and locations of life events – unless you are looking for records specifically related to their death, it is often not helpful to include a date and place of death into the search form.



Record Summary Page



Viewing Digital Images

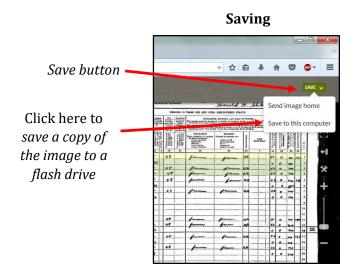


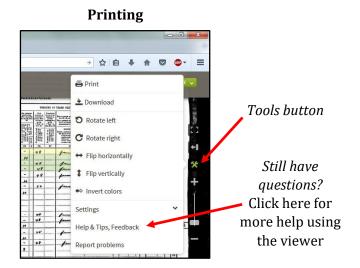
Saving Documents

Any documents or images you locate can be accessed again later from home by clicking on the green **Save** *in the top right corner of the screen*. You have the option to save a copy to the computer (and a flash drive) or send a direct link to the image to yourself via email to be viewed at home later.

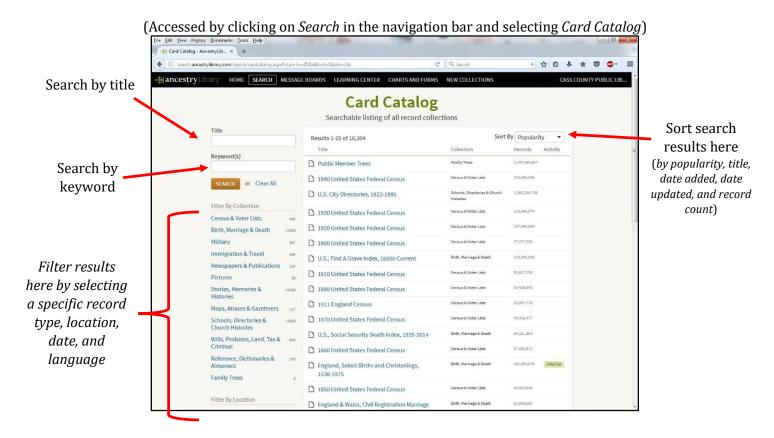
Printing Documents

To print the image, click on the *Tools* button located above the Zoom slider on the right side of the screen. You will be prompted to print the whole image or just the zoomed portion visible on the screen. The window will also notify you whether to print in *portrait* or *landscape orientation*, which can be adjusted by clicking the *Properties* button when the print window opens before clicking the *Print* button.





Card Catalog



Using the Card Catalog

The Card Catalog allows you to search for specific collections of records (i.e. 1930 United States Federal Census or Missouri Marriages, 1766-1983) and also manually browse for record collections. This way, you can discover new and unique collections of records on Ancestry that may not show up in the results of a basic search. The Card Catalog can be searched two ways, a title search and keyword search. Also, the filter column on the left side helps you when browsing for collections as well. It allows you to filter collection results based on record type, location, date, and language.

Title Search

This will provide a list of all record collections with the search term in the title. If you enter multiple words here, they *must be an exact match* to the way they appear in the collection title.

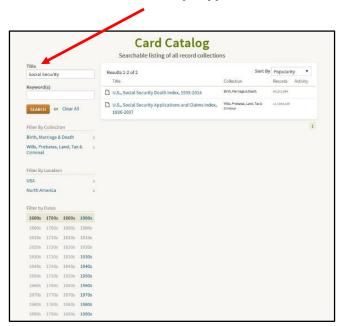
Keyword Search

This will search for the term(s) you've entered in both the title and the description of the collection. *It does not have to be an exact match*.

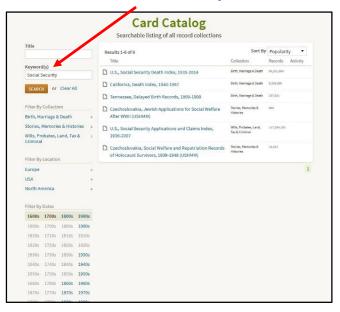
Note: It can be beneficial to try searching one way and then another to see how it changes the search results.

Example:

Title Search: Social Security
Only includes collections where the words
"Social Security" appear



Keyword Search: Social Security
Includes all collections where the words
"social" and/or "security" appear in either
the title and the description



Once you find a record collection you wish to search, click on the title to go to the search form for that specific collection.

Visit the library's locations page (<u>www.casscolibrary.org/locations</u>) for CCPL Genealogy's location, contact information, and hours of operation.

Information regarding our digital collections, access to online databases, submitting inquiries, and more, can be found on Cass County Public Library's Genealogy Resources page, located here: www.casscolibrary.org/genealogy

