



# Getting started on Ancestry.com

*Ancestry.com can take you on  
the journey of a lifetime.*

**SOME PEOPLE ARE LUCKY.** They have an attic full of family information, a great-aunt who's a walking archive or a family bible that's been updated for centuries. All of the above can get you off to a great start with your family story. But [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) can help you discover so much more.

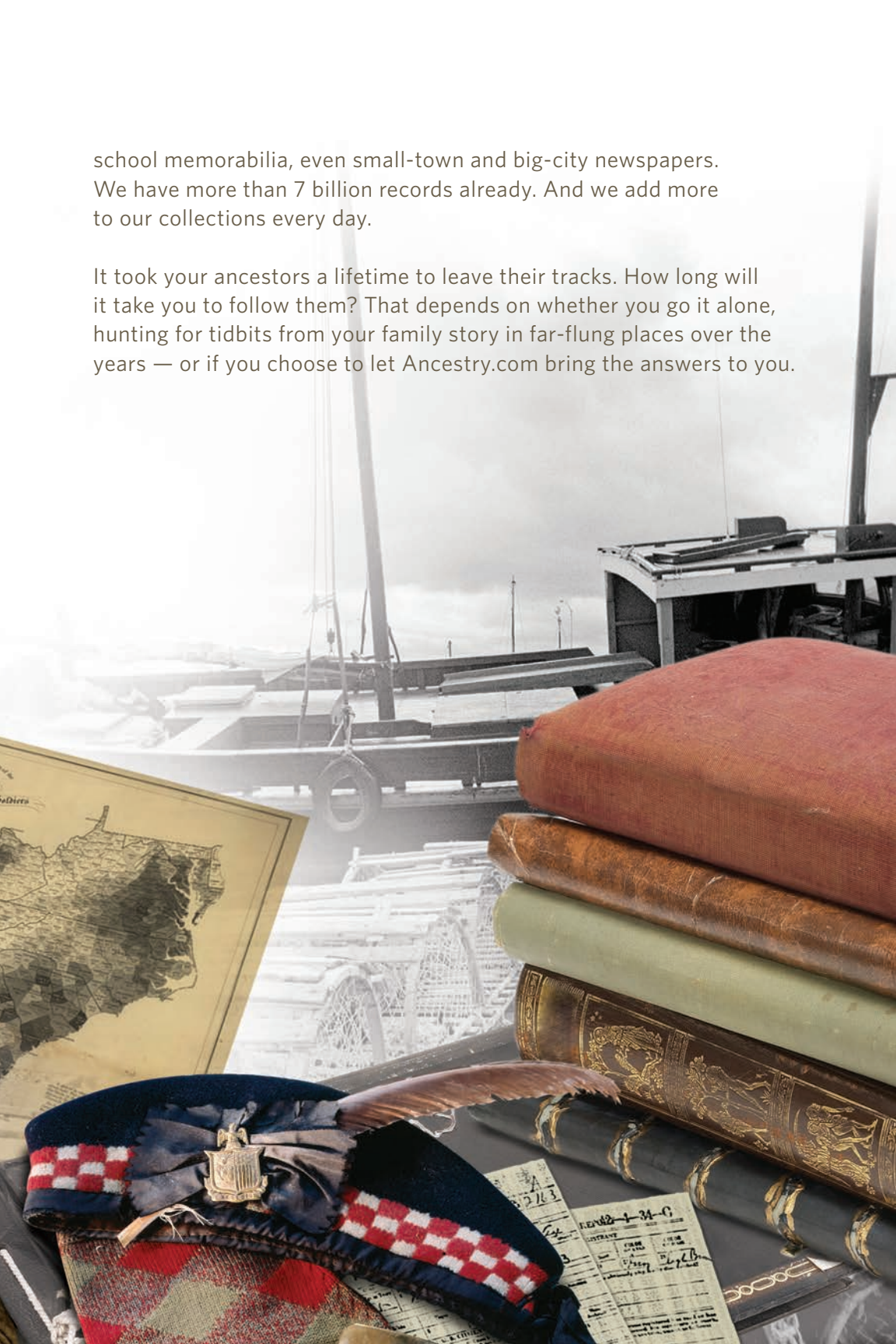
We've spent the past 11 years searching the world for details about your family and ours. We've collected census records, birth and death stats, information about military service and immigration, parish registrars,





school memorabilia, even small-town and big-city newspapers. We have more than 7 billion records already. And we add more to our collections every day.

It took your ancestors a lifetime to leave their tracks. How long will it take you to follow them? That depends on whether you go it alone, hunting for tidbits from your family story in far-flung places over the years — or if you choose to let Ancestry.com bring the answers to you.



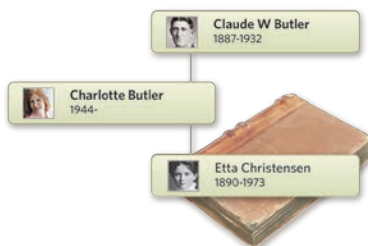
# GET STARTED IN THREE EASY STEPS

## ONE

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### Begin with the people you know best.

Visit [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) and click on the “Start a tree” link on the home page. Enter your own name and details and do the same for your parents. Then move on to your grandparents. Don’t worry if you can’t fill in all the blanks.



## TWO

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### Take a hint.

Once you’ve entered all the facts you can into your tree, we’ll automatically start searching our databases for records featuring your family. Click on a hint (a fluttering leaf in your tree) to see if our discoveries are a match.



## THREE

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### Get to know your family.

Know even more family names? Type them into your family tree too. We’ll also try to introduce you to other ancestors through hints. When you accept a hint, you can choose to update all or some information for the person in your tree. Or you can decline the hint altogether.



# What else?

*"I had no idea what I was doing when I started my online family tree. I just entered what little I could from memory. Lo and behold, Ancestry.com quickly gave me a stack of hints that linked me to all sorts of new details about my story."*

—Michele Moseley

## Login

### Log in.

You'll find login name and password boxes in the top right corner of the homepage. [Log in](#) to access personalized benefits like saved searches, record access and family tree editing. Don't know your login information? Click on ["Forgot"](#) under the Member Login box and follow the instructions from there.



### Let the facts do the talking.

Find someone in a 1900 census record, for example, and simply scroll to the right to find a birth year, birthplace, immigration dates and occupation. Scroll up and down to find family and neighbors.



### Take it easy on yourself.

When you're faced with tracing four grandparents through history, you can quickly become overwhelmed. Try focusing on one family line at a time.



### Go get'em.

Put on your detective hat and start [searching](#) the 7 billions records on Ancestry.com. Read on for search tips, details about the most common historical records and what they might tell you.

# MEET YOUR CONSTANT COMPANIONS.

Some records are so essential to learning your family's story, you'll quickly feel like you've known them forever. For example:

## U.S. Census Records

**What** - Beginning in 1790, the U.S. recorded the heads of households every 10 years. Since 1850, the census has included the names of all members of the household.

**Why** - Names aside, you get ages, birthplaces, employment details and other juicy tidbits. Look to 1930 first: it's the most recent census available and your best bet for a quick link to your family's past.

**Watch** - Can't find a relative you know was alive at the time? Search for the first name and birthplace or for your relative's sibling. Go back 10 years or forward 10 for other clues. And don't get hung up on 1890 — most census records for that year were destroyed in a fire.



## U.S. Immigration Records

**What** - Since the early 1800s American ports have been required to record anyone entering the United States. Prior to that, ship manifests informally tracked similar information.

**Why** - Learn where and when a trek started, where it finished, who went along and what they all looked like. The year and type of document will determine what you'll find. Luck out with a passport application and you may even get a photo.

**Watch** - Not everyone came through Ellis Island. Search smaller port cities and Canadian border crossings, which were sometimes cheaper, easier routes to America.



## U.S. Military Records

**What** – This collection has more than 100 million names representing Americans from all states in conflicts.

**Why** – Name, rank and serial numbers are just the beginning. Get spouse details. Find contact information for other family members. See an ancestor's actual signature on a draft card and much more.

**Watch** – Look for surprises in the WWII “old man” draft — draftees who far exceeded age 20.

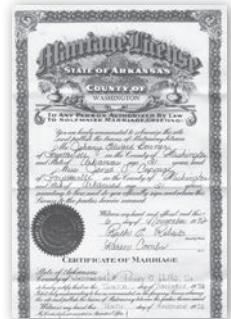


## Birth, Marriage and Death Records

**What** – Vital statistics offer unbiased facts on everything from birth and marriage to divorce and death.

**Why** – Discover exact dates, names and locations. You may even stumble upon cemetery records and related church registers linking you to information on christenings and baptisms.

**Watch** – Can't find someone in the Social Security Death Index? It may be that the death preceded the U.S. social security system. Or your relative may have worked for the railroad, which had its own retirement system separate from Social Security.



## Other Useful Records

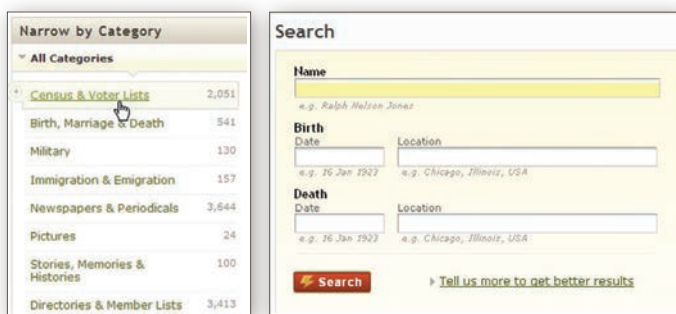
Once you've learned all you can from these collections, we still have millions more possible discoveries for you in collections such as Historical Newspaper & Periodicals, Family and Local Histories, International Records or even Court, Land and Probate Records. You can find more information on these collections in the [Learning Center](#) tab of the website.





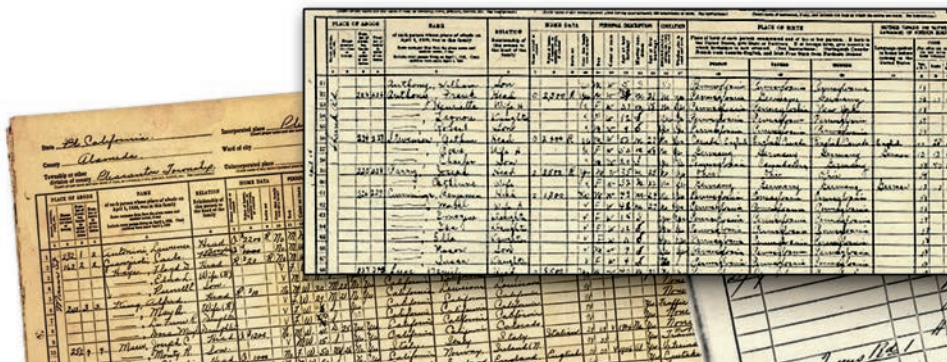
# STEP-BY-STEP: FINDING AN ANCESTOR IN THE CENSUS

1. Start with the search box on the Ancestry.com home page.
2. Enter your relative's first and last name. Include birth year and place if you can.
3. Click on "Search." Then click **"Census & Voter List"** in the left sidebar.
4. Review results by scrolling over a record name (ex: 1930 United States Federal Census) for a preview. Click on the record name to see details or select "View Image" to go directly to the census image.
5. Too many results? Not exactly what you wanted? Scroll to the bottom of the results page for options to refine your search.



## Searching isn't an exact science.

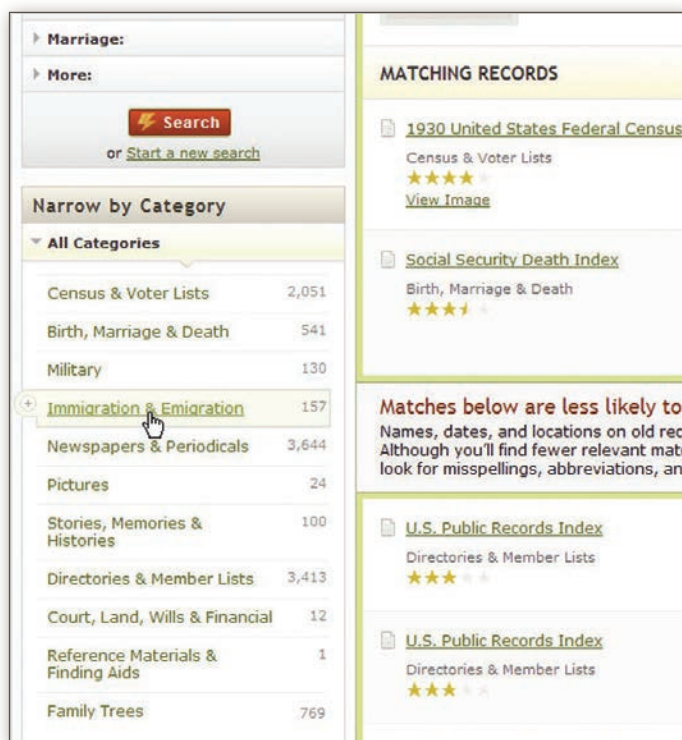
Selecting "Exact Matches Only" can help you quickly weed out the non-contenders in your search. But it may also mean you miss a family member whose stats weren't recorded perfectly. For example, conduct an "Exact Matches Only" searches for John Jones, who in 1920 was accidentally listed as Jon Jones, and you'd miss out a valuable census record.





# STEP-BY-STEP: TRACING THEIR TRAVELS IN IMMIGRATION RECORDS.

1. Start with the search box on the Ancestry.com home page.
2. Enter a relative's first and last name. Include birth year and place if you can.
3. Click on "Search."
4. Select "[Immigration & Emigration](#)" from the "Narrow Your Search" box on the left side of the screen.
5. Review results. Select "View Image" to see the actual arrival document. Scroll to the right to learn more details like occupation, birthplace, intended destination and possibly the name and address of someone back home



## Not all immigrations records were created the same.

What you find in immigration records like passenger arrival lists, Canadian border crossings and passport applications can vary greatly depending on the year and government requirements — if any — when the record was created. If the information you're looking for isn't there for your family member, try moving up and down the page and look for other names you recognize: often relatives and friends would immigrate together.

## That's not my ancestor ... is it?

Just because the name isn't identical, don't be too sure it's not the person you're looking for. Names may have been spelled phonetically or just plain incorrectly on census forms, immigration records and elsewhere. A census taker may have mistakenly given a border the same name as the home's owner. Or your ancestor may have simply decided to change or simplify their name (opting for Frank instead of Francesco, for example). If the other facts looks right — birthplace, date, family member names — dig a little further in other records to see if this new name really does belong in your family tree.



# BRING YOUR STORY TOGETHER IN YOUR FAMILY TREE.

Your Ancestry.com family tree lets you organize what you know about your ancestors. Get hints that can link you to historical records. Organize photos. Save historical records and more in one safe, convenient place online.

## Want to grow your tree? The census can help.

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- Search the Ancestry.com [census collection](#) for one of your ancestors.
- Found one? View the record image, looking at names of siblings, hometowns, birthplaces, dates and other information to be sure this is the right person. It's usually easy to determine, but for family members with common first and last names who lived in big cities, it can be trickier. Consider looking for a sibling with a unique name to find a common-named ancestor instead.
- When you have the right census record, select "Save."
- Choose "Attach to Someone in My Tree" and you'll be taken to a list of people in your tree to choose from. From there, you can:

## Add a new person to your tree.

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- If this record is for a new member of your family tree, click on the "Use the Information from This Record to Create a New Person" link.
- Review the information and add anything else you'd like to. Select "Save."
- You'll be taken to a new person page. From here you can add more relatives like a spouse or a parent to this person.

The image shows a screenshot of the Ancestry.com interface for adding a new person. The main form has the following fields:

- Name:** First & Middle names: "P Henry"; Surname: "Goodson".
- Gender:** Radio buttons for Male (selected), Female, and Unknown.
- Birth:** Date: "May 1876"; Place: "Vermont".
- Death:** Date and Place fields are empty.
- Email Address:** A text input field.
- Invite to family tree:** A checkbox that is currently unchecked.
- Buttons:** "Save" and "or Cancel".

Overlaid on the top right is a preview of a census record from the "1900 United States Federal Census & Voter Lists". The record details are:

- Name: P Henry Goodson
- Spouse: Bertha D
- Mother: Elizabeth A
- Father: Abner
- Head of Household: Abner Goodson
- Residence: 1900 - Green Town, Caledonia, Vermont
- Birth: May 1876 - Vermont



## Add details on someone already in your tree.

- If this record matches a person or even multiple people already in your tree, select “Attach” next to the appropriate name(s).
- Decide which information you’d like to import to your tree. Want to get more from a single search? Select “View Relatives from This Record” and you may be able to merge the entire family into your tree.
- When you’re finished, select “Add to Your Tree.”

**1900 United States Federal Census** **Your Family Tree**  
Meese/Hawley Family Tree

**John Meese**  
Check the fields on the left that you want to be copied to this person. [Show advanced options](#)

<b>Name</b> <input type="checkbox"/> John Meese	<b>John Herman Meese</b>
<b>Birth date</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Dec 1892	<b>2 December 1892</b>
<b>Birth place</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Ohio	<b>Cheviot, Hamilton, Ohio</b>
<b>Death date</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Death place</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Residence date</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900	<b>1900</b>
<b>Residence place</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Union Township, South Election Precinct, Clermont, Ohio	<b>Union Township, South Election Precinct, Clermont, Ohio</b>

**NEW:** You can also review the relatives of John Herman Meese on this record and select those you want merged into your tree.  
[Show relatives on this record](#) [Provide feedback](#)

**Add To Your Tree** or **Cancel**

## Then what?

View the person pages in your tree. You’ll be able to add information about spouses, children and vital stats, connect this person to other people in the family tree quickly and even upload photos and stories. Plus you’ll find Ancestry.com hints as well as links to other researchers looking for the same person. That could open up generation after generation.

**Our Big Family Tree** (Owner: LeonardHoland)

Home Person Overview People Family Tree

**Charles Nelson BRYANT**

Birth: 4 DEC 1875  
Washington, Indiana, USA

Death: 28 FEB 1965  
Cleveland, Conway, Arkansas, USA

[Save this person to your tree](#)

[View details](#)

**Timeline**

- 1875 Birth**  
4 Dec  
Washington, Indiana, USA
- 1880 Residence**  
Gibson, Washington, Indiana, USA

**Family Members**

**Parents**

- Thomas BRYANT**  
1834 - 1920
- Sarah Ann GARRISON**  
1850 - 1925

**Spouse & Children**

- Janie LEWIS**  
1877 - 1900
- Gladys Jewell BRYANT**  
1896 - 1967
- Mary M. "SKIPPER"**  
1860 -
- Rosa Bell HARWOOD**  
1894 - 1962
- Living BRYANT**  
-
- Zella Mae BRYANT**  
1904 - 1978

**Events** 14  
**Photos** 15  
**Stories** 1  
**Audio** 0  
**Videos** 0  
**Records** 8  
**Comments** 0  
**- Add -**

# A LITTLE FAMILY TIME GOES A LONG WAY.

Centuries of family history don't always materialize overnight. No matter how much time you can dedicate to discovering your story, we have an activity for you.

## 5- to 10-minute activities

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- Search for your ancestors on [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)
- Begin your family tree
- Upload a few photos
- Follow an Ancestry Hint to a record



## 30-minute activities

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- Complete a three-generation family tree
- Write down names and important dates for ancestors you know
- Interview an older relative to capture what they remember about your ancestors
- Invite family to view your tree or contribute

## 1- to 2-hour activities

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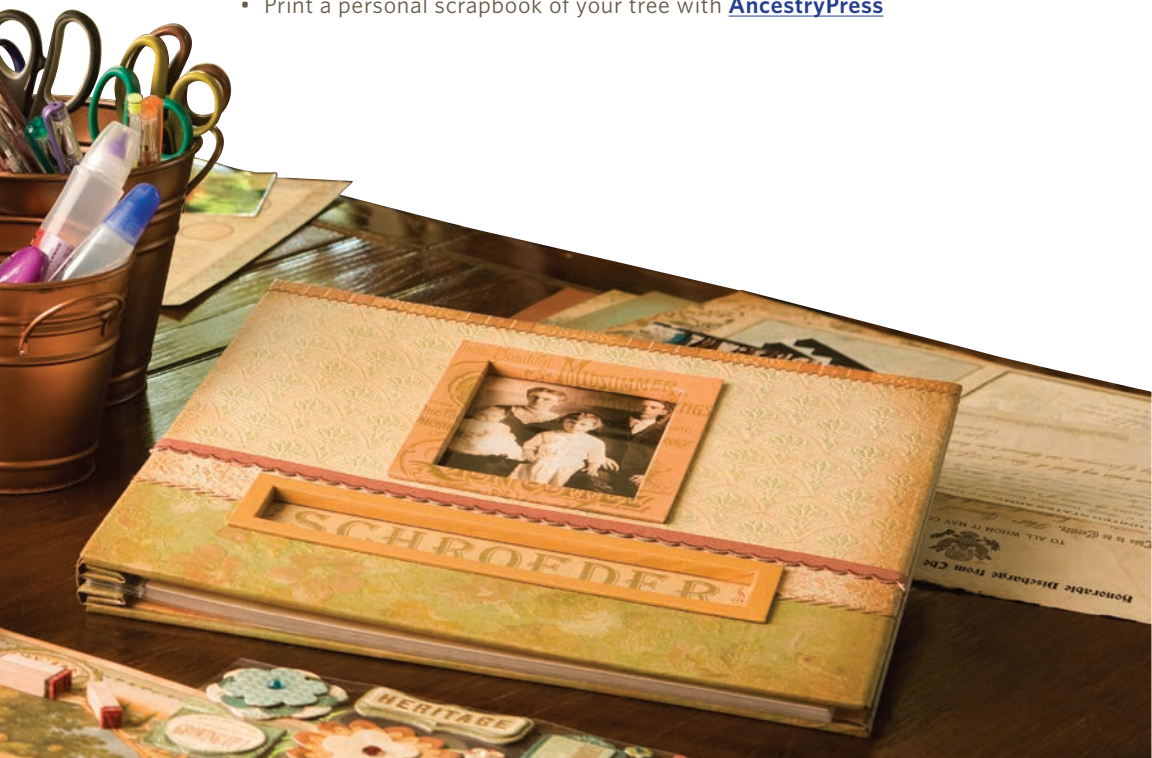
- Find additional historical records through [Advanced Search](#)
- Print and frame a set of family photos and records
- Watch an Ancestry webinar on family trees, searching or creating a custom book or poster

## Weekend activities

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- Complete a four-generation family tree
- Scan and upload an entire photo album
- Thoroughly interview and record relatives' stories
- Print a personal scrapbook of your tree with [AncestryPress](#)





# HELPFUL RESOURCES

## **The Ancestry.com Learning Center**

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Simply click on the “Learning Center” tab on Ancestry.com or go to [Ancestry.com/learn](https://www.ancestry.com/learn) to access countless tools, tips and tricks.

## **The Ancestry.com Community**

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Tap into the collective brainpower of millions of registered users in the Ancestry.com community and possibly even connect with other members researching the same family tree. Visit the “community” tab of Ancestry.com or go to [Ancestry.com/community](https://www.ancestry.com/community) to set up your profile today.

## **Your Account**

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Click on [“My Account”](#) in the upper right corner of Ancestry.com any time to access details on your membership, update your contact or payment information, edit your profile or manage your communication preferences.

## **Member Services**

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Don't forget, we're here to help if you have questions. You can reach us between 10 am and 6 pm Eastern Time, Monday through Friday at 1-800-262-3787 toll-free.

# HELPFUL HINTS

## Remember, dates are relative.

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Information on some records, like death records, often came from family members who may have guessed at the correct birthday or immigration date, so dates are relative.

## Forget how you spell your name.

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Until dictionaries became widespread in the later 19th century, words were often written as they sounded, with local dialects and inconsistent capitalization (i.e. Bowling to Bolen). This was not a sign of lesser education. However, it can make your detective work a bit more challenging.

## Where should you draw the line?

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For many years, vital records (birth, marriage and death records) were recorded at the county rather than the state level. As boundaries have changed constantly since the U.S. was settled, learning where county lines were drawn long ago may help you find additional records and information.

## Better safe than sorry.

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Store your family's precious heritage in many places — on your hard drive, in a printed book and online in your Ancestry Family Tree. Make sure as many family members as possible participate. Don't fall into the procrastination trap, waiting until you have more time to do it all before you can share discoveries with others.







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