

Introducing the New Ancestry.com

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Genealogy's Star

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The new look for Ancestry.com

The Ancestry.com website has been substantially updated during 2015. If you have used the website during this year, you have been invited to the new website. Sometime, perhaps before the end of October, 2015, the old-style website will be discontinued. The Ancestry.com website has the following:

- More than 2 million paying subscribers
- More than 16 billion records
- More than 70 million family trees with 6 billion profiles
- Free access to LDS Users

Most of the changes to the website are visible in your family tree (if you have one on the website) and affect the look and feel of the website. The changes are designed to work better across all mobile devices and will work the same on both Microsoft Windows computers and Apple OS X computers. The new features include the following:

- A more powerful storytelling feature called LifeStory
- A redesigned Facts page
- A new Gallery view
- A new Hints view

The program is connected to the FamilySearch Family Tree for LDS users.

Searching strategies

The first and most important point about searching on Ancestry.com is to use the Card Catalog. The Card Catalog is a comprehensive listing of all of the collections on the website. There are a series of filters on the left-hand side of the Card Catalog page that allow you to focus your searches on a specific geographic area or topic. You can then use the following search tips to search one collection at a time.

In order to find individuals on Ancestry.com it may be necessary to search under a variety of combination of names, dates and where appropriate, places. Let's say you are trying to find John Erikson in Wisconsin about 1900. You will immediately see that there are a lot of John Eriksons.

Here are some tips for narrowing the choices:

Look at the entire family and select a less common name to search. Here with a father named John, you might try the wife's name or one of the children, look for the least common name.

Try searching after adding one piece of information at a time. For example, searching for the first name and a date and place, last name and a date and place.

Search by adding information one fact at a time. For example, search on the first name, then on the first name, surname, and place, then on the names, place and a specific date. Then try different combinations of names, place and dates. To get the most out your search, finally, type in as much information as possible. Clicking on a category or database listed to the left of the search fields will take you to a new search results page that shows the results found only in the chosen category.

If you are looking for a specific type of information, go to the tab for that category. For example, if you would like to search for Family Trees, go to that tab, you will get the best results by filling out the search box specific to the type of content being searched. Remember to search specific databases, such as specific Wisconsin records for John Erikson. Often, an Ancestry.com search of a specific database will come up with a name not found in a more general search.

The Tabs – What are they?

Trees

Ancestry.com will use every fact you enter in your own personal Family Tree to search all of the billions of historical records, photos and family trees for missing details about your ancestors. Use the database to look for records on existing or missing ancestors. Pro – a huge number of families and individuals. Con – very few of the individuals have sources even though Ancestry.com automates the process.

Search

Search Historical Records, Family Trees, Stories and Publications, Photos and Maps. Do a general search or focus in on a particular location. Ancestry.com has many new search parameters in their Advanced Search, allowing more specifics in locating your ancestors. You can now search on any life events that match a location, including birth, residence, marriage, military service and death.

You can add a family member to the search and also search by keyword.

To search in the right collections, you can click on “Collection Priority.” New fields make it more flexible to add any details you might know about life events or relationships of the person you are looking for. For example, the new search fields you can enter an approximate birth year or make an educated guess, if you do not know for sure.

DNA

Ancestry.com does DNA Testing both paternal and maternal utilizing the state of the art laboratory, Sorenson Genomics, for its DNA testing services. Ancestry.com has recently hinted at a new DNA product or website that will become available shortly.

Help

Use geographical or surname message boards to post inquiries about your ancestors. Use the social networking site, Member Connect to stay in touch with others researching the same family lines. Ancestry.com scans public member trees to find members who are researching the people in your tree. Once you connect a matching ancestor from another member’s tree to one of your ancestors, they will let you know when that member adds new life events, source records, photos or stories featuring your ancestor. You can then decide whether or not to add the information to your own tree. Search the Ancestry Member Directory to find family members and others interested in the same family lines or geographic areas that you are.

Help – Support Center and Learning Center

The Support Center offers both a forum, where you can ask the community, and extensive support articles. Often overlooked, the Learning Center contains instructional videos, Ancestry Magazine, Weekly and Monthly Updates, and connections to Webinars. There are also a large selection of free forms and charts.

Help – Community, Message Boards and Hire an Expert

The Community section of the website contains links to the online forum and the World Archives Project, the Ancestry.com indexing project, as well as many other resources. You can leave inquiries on the Message Boards about your ancestors and, if needed, you can hire a professional genealogist to help you with your research.

Extras -- Shop

Purchase Books, The Ancestry Magazine, Maps, Records and Software, including the best-selling Family Tree Software.

The Ancestry.com Family

Fold3.com

Ancestry.com now owns the former Footnote.com website now Fold3.com with its millions of documents from the U.S. National Archives.

Genline.com

Swedish Records mainly parish records. Most of these records have been consolidated into the World Edition of Ancestry.com

Archives.com

Access to billions of digitized records.

Newspapers.com

Millions of pages of digitized newspapers.

AncestryDNA

Find you genetic connections.

FindAGrave.com

Millions of photos with information about gravesites around the world.