

Researching Your Ancestors at the Library



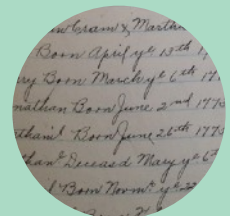
Ancestry Library Edition

Visit the library to use the powerful Ancestry database.



HeritageQuest

Or use HQO from home to search U.S. Census records.



Print Records

Libraries also have unique local records not always available online.

Getting Started

To begin genealogical research, first gather what you know...

Write down what you know about your parents' and grandparents' **birthdates**, where they were **born** and **lived**, and **dates and places of death**. Talk to family members to find out what they can contribute. Start a simple pedigree tree to help you keep track of your findings. Try to gather as much information about people born prior to 1940.

1

U.S. CENSUS

Records from 1940 and earlier can be found on ALE and HQO.

2

NH BIRTHS

Births prior to 1900 can be found on Ancestry Library Edition.

3

NH MARRIAGES & DEATHS

Records prior to 1947 can be found on ALE.

Availability of Records

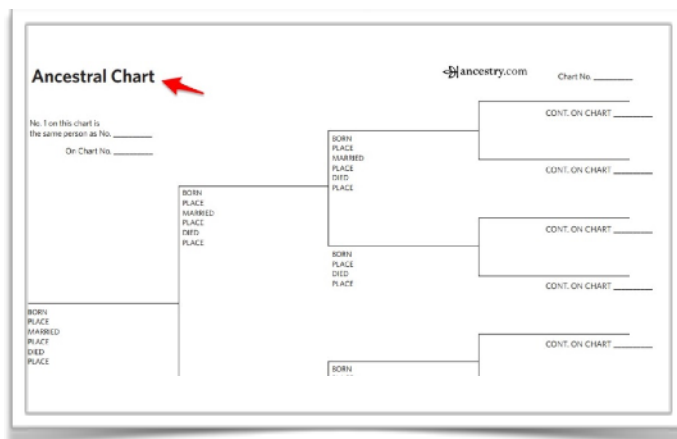
Not all records are publicly available everywhere (see note at the bottom of this page). The U.S. Census records are released only every 72 years for privacy reasons. This means that the newest census records available are from 1940. No one born after 31 December 1939 will appear in census results.

Researchers looking for New England family members and starting with census records, it is best to start your search with people born prior to 1940.

Ancestry Library Edition (ALE)

Ancestry Library Edition is a powerful genealogical database for use in the public library that includes:

- U.S. Census Records
- Canadian Census Records
- Assorted European Census Records
- U.S. Vital Records
- Canadian Vital Records
- Assorted European Vital & Church Records
- U.S. Military Records
- U.S. City Directories



Tip: Use ALE's Card Catalog (Search >> Browse Card Catalog) to discover resources for a specific state or region.

HeritageQuest Online (HQO)

HeritageQuest Online uses the same powerful census database, but is limited to these major resources:

- U.S. Census Records
- 1890 Veterans' Schedule
- City Directories

Tip: Unlike Ancestry Library Edition, HQO can be use outside of the library. Ask your librarian for the at-home login information.

NEW HAMPSHIRE VITAL RECORDS

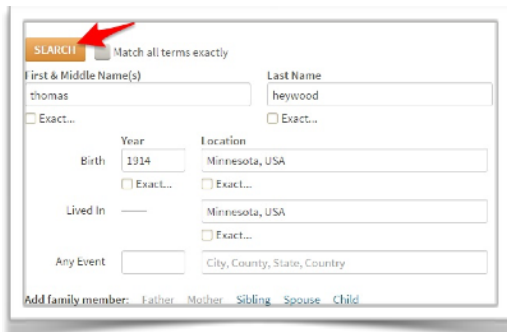
Per New Hampshire statute 5-C:105, "Birth records more than 100 years old and death, marriage, and divorce records more than 50 years old shall be considered part of the public domain."

Some other New England states have similar restrictions and it can be difficult to piece together a family tree when only using an electronic database. With the help of paper records, such as the vital records found in some town reports and city directories, clues can be found to keep your search on track.

Name of Father.	Maternal Name of Mother.	Occupation of Father.
John Charter	Elija Houston	Laborer
J. Henry Smith	Laura A. Severance	Farmer
George Eastman	Allen N. Page	Farmer
Charles H. Prince	Martha J. Gookin	Lumber Dealer
Father unknown	Kattie M. Webster	
Frank A. Heath	Eta M. Sears	Laborer
Olive Bayou	Sarah Gilbert	Farmer
Henry G. Shaw	Mattie B. Ball	Laborer
William J. Holmes	Naomi A. Shaw	Farmer
John H. Batchelder	Lilla F. Campbell	Farmer
Charles F. Taylor	Jessie M. Shaw	Farmer
Marshall W. Scott	Eta E. Bennett	Farmer
Charles C. Holmes	Helen M. Low	Lumber Dealer
Daniel S. Lorton	Eta N. Orlinson	Farmer
Calvo W. Emerson	Lucretia Merrill	Farmer
Charles P. Sanborn	Aida A. Tucker	Farmer
Henry L. Smith	Elija M. Rayao	Farmer
Willard Mignault	Mattie Houston	Farmer

Starting Your Electronic Search

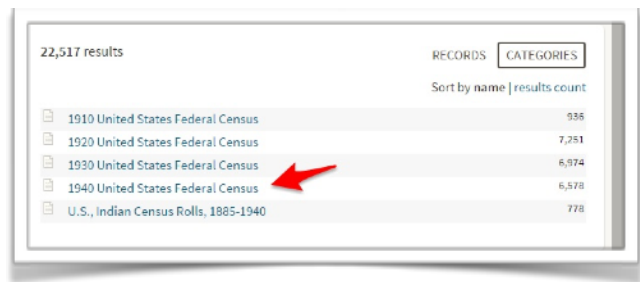
Where and how to begin genealogical research is a bit subjective, but starting with the U.S. Census records, working backwards from the 1940 Census, can be an effective search strategy. The U. S. Census records can be found in both ALE and HQO. Both databases use the same census data and now index the exact same data for each record.



A screenshot of a search interface. At the top left, there is a "SEARCH" button with a red arrow pointing to it. To the right of the button is a checkbox labeled "Match all terms exactly". Below this are several input fields: "First & Middle Name(s)" with the value "thomas", "Last Name" with the value "heywood", "Birth" with the value "1914", "Location" with the value "Minnesota, USA", "Lived In" with the value "Minnesota, USA", and "Any Event" with the value "City, County, State, Country". There are also checkboxes for "Exact..." next to each field. At the bottom, there is a link "Add family member" followed by "Father", "Mother", "Sibling", "Spouse", and "Child".

Using the information gathered about parents or grandparents, start the search with a close relative born prior to 1940. Be sure to search not only the full first and last name, but also include a birthdate and/or the state where he or she was most likely living in 1940.

Note that it is possible to narrow down the results to a specific data set (census year) before or after the search. It is recommended to only search one year (1940) at once to keep the search results from getting too overwhelming.



A screenshot of search results showing a list of census records. The top left indicates "22,517 results". The top right has "RECORDS" and "CATEGORIES" tabs. Below that is "Sort by name | results count". The list contains the following entries:

Record	Results Count
1910 United States Federal Census	988
1920 United States Federal Census	7,781
1930 United States Federal Census	6,974
1940 United States Federal Census	6,578
U.S., Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940	778

A red arrow points to the "1940 United States Federal Census" entry.

Viewing the Records and Looking for Clues

Both ALE and HQO present a set of search results that may or may not be a potential match. Each listing is an abstract of the full record. Browse through the records and see if any of the records might be a good match. All indexed data and often an image of the original record can be seen by viewing the full record.

Most, but not all, of the important data is transcribed in the record. Take a moment to see if the names of the parents and siblings match your own records. **Finding matching family members with correct ages are oftentimes the best evidence you have to conclude that a match has been found.**

When you find a matching (or potentially matching) record, make note of the data in the pedigree chart, including data for the parents and siblings, and consider printing the record for your own files.

Don't forget to view the original record. There may be additional clue from fields not transcribed.

SEARCH TIP:

Finding ancestors with common names – or names that are easily misspelled – can be a challenge! If you are presented with too many choices, consider editing your search to include other family members. The databases are very robust and can handle complex searches.

Family Tree Hints

With a subscription to the commercial Ancestry.com service, users are able to log into their account and create a family tree. The library version of the database does not allow library patrons to make their own family trees or get personalized hints on the tree — but it does not mean that the hints are not available!

Sometimes you have an ancestor in common with other researchers. The other researchers might have done some work on a common ancestor and records associated with that ancestor will be listed as “Suggested Records.”



Not all of the records saved to an ancestor are correct! Use the hints as clues for your own research.

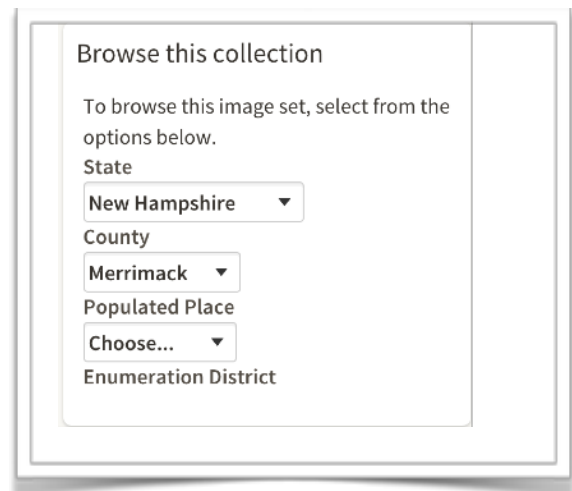
HeritageQuest Online does not provide suggested records.

Browsing vs. Searching

As previously mentioned, the search results are typically very good and all names are indexed, making for a very robust search. However, there are times when it is impossible to find an ancestor by family name. This usually occurs when the name was not understood by the census taker or the transcription is not correct. At times like these, browsing a collection based

on the known or suspected location of the family can be very helpful.

To browse a collection, it is important to be in a single collection. On the right-side column, look for the option to browse this collection. Narrow your search results down and load the images of the collection.



How to Use the Card Catalog

Ancestry Library Edition contains a Card Catalog. The Card Catalog shows all available resources by keyword or title. For instance, searching for “New Hampshire” as a title brings up search results for vital records, probate court, and directories from the state. Use the Card Catalog to discover a resources and the years covered by that resource.

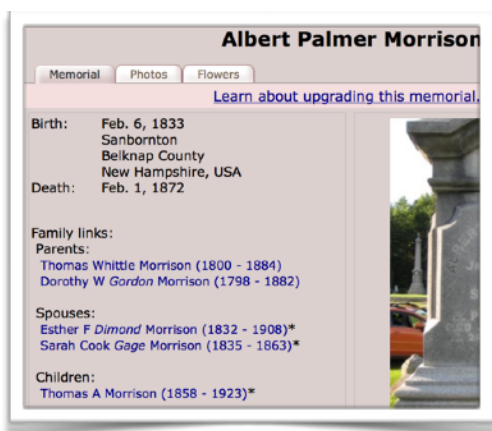


Searching Beyond the Basics

The U.S. Census records and vital records will provide any researcher with a wealth of data, but there are more resources available for those wanting to dig deeper.

Find a Grave

Both ALE and HQO provide links to FindaGrave.com records, but this database is freely available to search independently. Some records include obituaries or pictures of gravestones, both of which can be invaluable to genealogical research. Additionally, some records include links to possible family matches found in the same cemetery. It is also possible to search a cemetery by family name.

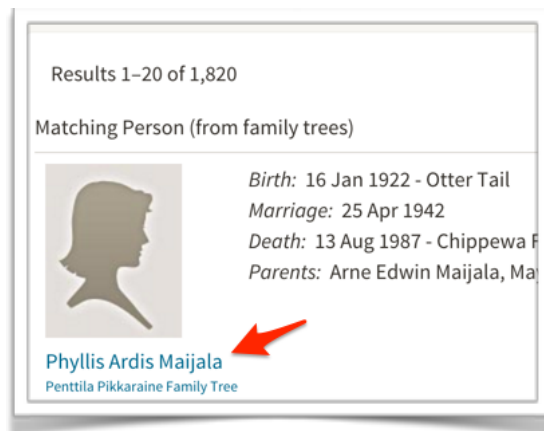


Ancestry Family Trees

Family trees found on Ancestry can contain otherwise hidden clues, such as information about maternal lines, but take care to do as much research as possible to verify the information.

When searching the Ancestry Library Edition database, some — but not all — people searches will result in a possible family tree match. This only happens if the ancestor has been added to another user's family tree.

To access the family tree record, click on name.

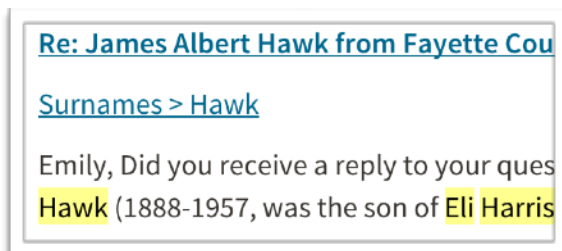


To see the entire (public) family tree, click on "View Tree."



Message Boards

Over the years, Ancestry has acquired genealogical resources, such as rootsweb and their resources. Valuable clues can be found by searching for early relatives in these boards.



Ellis Island Passenger Search

This free, but registration-required site contains a searchable index of more than 50 million arrivals through Ellis Island. Once you find an ancestor, it is helpful to browse the ship manifest to see if others from the family accompanied them.

<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/passenger>

Census Records of Canada

The Canadian government provides access to census records from 1825-1916. Ancestry.com provides access to 1921. Like the American census records, the data collected in the records vary from year to year.

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/census/pages/census.aspx>

Family Search

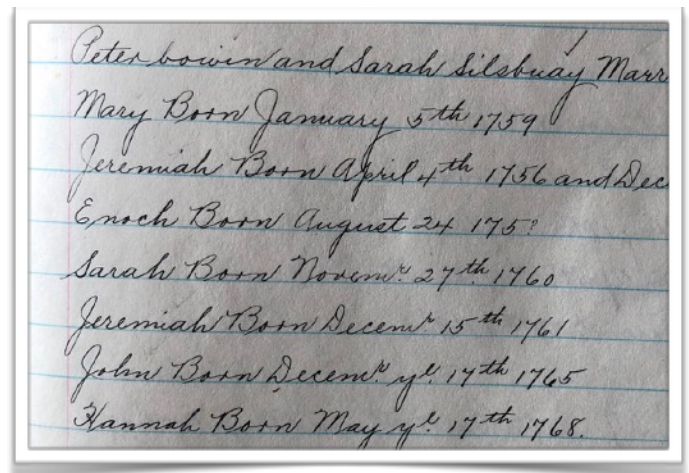
This free, (registration-required) site offered by the Latter Day Saints provides an index to the U.S. Census records and access to the records for 1940. Registered users can also build family trees and view other members' trees.

<https://familysearch.org>

Print Resources

Only a fraction of the available family histories and genealogical tools are available online. Individuals with New Hampshire roots should look at town histories and locally-written family histories for information about their ancestors. The State library holds 2400 published state and New England family histories.

Town reports can also offer the local genealogist clues. The State Library has the "Sargent Index," a comprehensive name index of town reports from approximately 1640-1840, depending on when the town was chartered. Many early town reports included vital records data that can be difficult to find elsewhere.



RESEARCH TIPS:

Keeping track of your findings can be a little more challenging when using the library versions of the genealogy databases. If you prefer not to print out copies of all of the records, consider bringing your own laptop to the library and saving screenshots of the records. Evernote is a free Windows/Mac program that takes screenshots and, even better, saves the screenshots, clippings, and text into full-text searchable notes.

