Ancestry & HeritageQuest: An Introduction to Online Genealogy Services from New Orleans Public Library

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Ancestry Library Edition and HeritageQuest

- Ancestry Library Edition is available on-site at any of New Orleans Public Library's 14 branches. A list of branch locations is available at www.nolalibrary.org. It is also available on-site at Jefferson Parish Library locations.

- Ancestry Library Edition can't be accessed from home, but HeritageQuest can and has some overlapping collections (we'll cover these later).

- Ancestry Library Edition is completely free!

- HeritageQuest is a large genealogy database developed by ProQuest and "powered" by Ancestry.com.

- This means that the layout and search tools look the same (or similar).

- It is completely free, and can be accessed with a library card at home!

- HeritageQuest offers some resources that overlap with Ancestry, and many more that do not.

How to Access Ancestry Library Edition and HeritageQuest

1. Go to www.nolalibrary.org and choose "Research", then "Databases":
   Or
   www.jplibrary.net and choose "Databases"

2. If you are at accessing HeritageQuest at home, you will be asked to enter your library card number:

2. Choose the database you would like to use from My Library's Databases

Basic Search Tips

- Begin all searches with a clear goal in mind—for example, determining your great-great-grandmother's birth date, or finding the names of great-grandparents on your father's side.

- Be prepared to work. Bring in your notebook/binder, your memory stick, etc.

- Never assume a search will take you only 10-15 minutes!

- Avoid doing a general search on the home page. Learn the record sets offered by each database, so you know where to start searching for that type of record.

More Search Tips

- Be flexible. Records have spelling changes and errors that you can learn to anticipate.

- Ages and birth dates often vary by a few years.

- Databases can only give you what they have, not what you think it should be!

- Math: You can use a birth date to calculate ages and confirm identities.

  - For example: You know John Smith was born in 1856. You have a census listing for a 31-year old John Smith in 1900. 1900-1856=44, so this is NOT the right man!

Advanced Search Tools

Wildcards & Truncation Symbols

  - Use ***** to replace up to 5 characters in a word – e.g. JOHN***** to retrieve JOHN, JOHNS, JOHNSON, etc.

  - Use **?** to replace only one character – e.g. CH**?**N for CHAN, CHEN, CHIN

Viewing, Sending, Printing Results

- Search results are ranked according to relevancy so the most "relevant" results are located near the top of the list

- You may end up with a LOT of results—try adjusting your original search

- If you click on the record, you will see more information.

- Viewing the original record may show even more

- There are links to suggested records to the side. These are worth investigating!

- Results can be printed, saved to a flash drive and emailed directly from the site

- The original image can also be printed and saved

Troubleshooting Tips

- If you are not finding your relatives, try taking out the first name/middle name or replace the first name with an initial

- If you are looking for someone with a more "unusual" first name, you stand a better chance of finding the person in the database

- Be careful when it comes to using nicknames in your search field!

  - E.g. Margaret – nicknames include Meg, Maggie, Margie, May, Peg and Daisy

- Also try looking for a relative with a name that has fewer variations, such as spouse or child. For example, Olga is not as common and does not offer as many variations as Karolina (e.g. Carol, Caroline, etc.) or Elizabeth (e.g. Elisabeth, Liza, Ellie, etc.)

- Try broadening your search geographically. Add in adjacent locales.

- Read the **collection information**. You will not find a birth certificate in a death index.

- Search for a similar collection if you can't find the one you want. For example, there is no birth index for the whole state of Illinois, but there is Cook County, Illinois birth certificates index for 1871-1922.

- Both **Ancestry** and **HeritageQuest** offer tips and tutorials on their sites

Ancestry Record Collections:

Vital Records – Birth, Marriage, & Death

- Can include date and place, parents' names, occupation and residence.

- Cause of death is included in most death records.

- Created at or near the time of the event, increasing accuracy.

- Collection includes indexes to help you request copies from vital records offices, and sometimes images of actual records.

Military

- Military records may include dates of birth and death, residence, names of family members, military rank and affiliation, and more.

- Records include draft records, service records, pension records, bounty land records, claim records, and military histories.

Immigration and Travel

- Early immigration records are not as detailed as 20th century immigration records. More recent records may include birthplace, last residence in the country of origin, names of relatives, immigration details, occupation, etc.

- Records include passenger arrivals, naturalizations, border crossings, emigration, passports, and convict transportations. The collection includes immigration records from the U.S. and several other countries.

Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal

- Collection includes indexes as well as some full records.

- Probates and wills show the names of family and details of an ancestor's estate.

- Land records can link generations as a property is passed on.

- Tax records may list possessions, income, and address.

- Financial and insurance records can contain details known only to that person or family members.

- Criminal records will show transgressions, disputes and other details.

City and Area Directories

- Usually contains name, occupation, home and business addresses.

- Includes street directories, advertisements (for an ancestor's business), government officials, charitable organizations, churches, cemeteries, hotels, maps, etc.

- Places your ancestor in a specific location in a particular year. Use this to seek out other local records that may have been created while your ancestor lived there.

Newspapers

- Includes obituary indexes for certain areas and papers as well as a small selection of actual papers, and links to other resources.

- You can access local papers in our Historic New Orleans Newspapers Database (see the card included in handouts).

- Genealogybank.com and Newspapers.com offer papers from around the country, but cost money.

Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers

- Knowledge of locations can be critical to determining what civil jurisdiction may hold records, what types of records are available, and where you ancestors may have moved to.

- May include features like churches, cemeteries, government buildings, and the names of property holders.

- Gazetteers are dictionaries of place names and contain descriptions of transportation routes and the economy of the area. They can include historical information on seats of government, public institutions (e.g., prisons, schools, etc.), churches, etc. Population statistics can show common nativity.

Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs

- Important reference resources for understanding antiquated terms in documents, foreign languages, and more.

- Information about many different record types—why they were kept, what they contain, and where to find them.

- Lists of libraries, archives, courthouses, online resources, and other helpful institutions.

- Collection includes guides to history, geography, and surname origins, and finding aids that can lead you to obscure records.

Stories, Memories & Histories

- Published family histories may link to your family lines and can include the names, birth, marriage, and death dates, relationships, and oral histories. Can contain errors, but may still help.

- Collection contains indexes to genealogical and biographical materials, including the Biography & Genealogy Master Index (BGMI), which can alert you to the existence of published biographical and genealogical materials that may not be available online.

Public Member Trees

- Shows Ancestry members' publicly viewable family trees. Ancestry Library Edition allows you to *view* them.

- Trees can only be *created* by paid subscribers. Tree creation is not available in Ancestry Library Edition.

- **Family tree data is taken "as is" by Ancestry and does <u>not</u> guarantee accuracy, completeness, or timeliness.**

- Ancestry cannot force a member to change their posted tree to match your research.

Pictures

- Includes member-submitted photographs of individuals, families, homes, cemetery tombstones, naturalization papers, marriage certificates, drawings, maps and other documents that may not be found elsewhere.

- Other collections in this category include school yearbooks, images of passenger ships, select U.S. headstones, African American Photos, U.S. Civil War Photos, images of Professional Baseball Players, historical post cards, and the Library of Congress Photo Collection, 1840-2000.

Resources not carried in Ancestry

- Family & Local Histories collection - **HeritageQuest**

- Freedman's Bank Records - **HeritageQuest**

- Historical Newspaper Collection - Local papers in **NOPL databases**, and an index of all American papers at **Chronicling America**

- **PER**iodical **S**ource **I**ndex - **HeritageQuest**

HeritageQuest Record Collections

Duplicates from Ancestry

Census, city directories, military records, immigration records, will and probates, maps and photos, records from other countries

Books:

- Includes thousands of rich collections of published family histories that may link to your family lines and can include names, birth, marriage, and death dates, relationships, and stories.

- Although published family histories can contain errors, the clues they contain can lead you and greatly help your research process.

U.S. Serial Set:

- The *United States Congressional Serial Set* began publication with the 15th Congress, 1st Session (1817).

- **HeritageQuest** includes Private Relief Actions, Memorials, and Petitions from the set.

- Also includes content from the *American State Papers*, the set's predecessor.

- The collection covers 1789-1969.

Freedman's Bank:

- Covers 1865-1871

- A great source for African American heritage because of the amount of personal information recorded.

- Be sure to view the corresponding image of the original document in order to obtain all possible information available for them.

Contact Information

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www.nolalibrary.org > Research > Louisiana Division